

# Glendale residents join council members for 'Workboot' meeting at Scholl Canyon

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**Arin Mikailian**

The City Council and residents met at a hill overlooking the Scholl Canyon Landfill Tuesday to talk both about a potential expansion and, incongruently, ideas about reducing the amount of trash that's trucked there daily.

The gathering was the latest in a series of "Workboot" meetings that allow residents to interact with various city departments and utilities.

An environmental impact report assessing two options to expand the landfill has been in the works for nearly a decade. After three public comment periods, the report could be heading to the council for a vote to certify it early next year.

But there would still have to be a separate vote to actually get the expansion effort off the ground.

In operation since 1961, the 535-acre landfill can receive about 3,400 tons of trash daily, but currently gets about 1,000 tons of waste each day.

At that pace, burying trash there is sustainable until it reaches capacity within 20 years, city staffers estimate.

A proposal to raise the height of the landfill would extend its life by 13 years, while the same vertical expansion along with a horizontal expansion would extend its existence by 19 years.

The city, however, is also looking into waste-conversion practices, namely anaerobic digestion, which can convert some organic materials into gas and reduce the amount of physical waste that ends up in a landfill.

Councilwoman Laura Friedman asked with that practice and others why the landfill should be expanded.

City Manager Scott Ochoa responded by saying the city isn't necessarily trying to get out of the landfill business, but instead trying to shrink it.

"We're trying to make the landfill component of our business appropriately small to reflect the fully integrated system we have," he said.

Maurice Oillataguerre, environmental program administrator, said with waste-conversion technologies, there still would be some material that needs to be buried. If there's no room to do it at the landfill, it would have to be trucked elsewhere, as far as 100 miles away.

"As I mentioned, all of the landfills are far away," he said. "We don't want to get in the business of trucking our waste 100 miles. The environmental impacts are a lot bigger than if we just expand here."

Glendale Water & Power Director Steve Zurn said he's been in talks with vendors about anaerobic digestion, but nothing yet is set in stone.

Councilwoman Paula Devine pointed out that waste tonnage has dramatically decreased since the mid-1990s, from about 1,500 tons a day heading to the landfill to between 800 and 1,000 tons today.

She commended residents for recycling more and cutting down on waste, something she wanted to point out even though she said she wasn't in favor or against expanding the landfill at the moment.

"My concern is if the tonnage is going down then why would we need an expansion?" Devine said.

She added the future of waste in Glendale could be a mix of landfill expansion and waste-conversion technologies.

A group of Eagle Rock residents, who live adjacent to the landfill across the Los Angeles border, also attended the meeting and shared concerns about the potential health impacts of a landfill expansion.

Some questioned why Glendale maintains an entrance on the Eagle Rock side for trash trucks to gain entry instead of having an entrance in Glendale.

Mona Field, one of the Eagle Rock residents, urged the council not to rush their decision of expansion.

Zurn said the council ultimately has the final say on the expansion, and that decision would come in a separate vote after the environmental impact report is certified — should the council decide to act.

"The [environmental impact report] could sit on the shelf forever," he said.

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